



7 December 2003

Historic District Commission  
City of Rockville  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Commissioners Powell, Broadhurst, Harcraft, Maloney, and Van Balgooy,

I strongly support the nomination of the Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge. I write as an architectural historian who has devoted the past thirty-five years to examining many aspects of the built environment in the United States, especially from the late nineteenth through the mid twentieth centuries. I have served as president of the Society of Architectural Historians, vice president of the Vernacular Architecture Forum, and as a member of the National Historic Landmarks review committee. Currently I chair the Maryland Governor's Consulting Committee for the National Register of Historic Places. I have lectured extensively across the country on issues pertaining to the preservation of architecture and landscapes of the mid twentieth century, including keynote addresses at the two national conferences on the subject sponsored by the National Park Service. Since moving to Washington in 1983, I have spent considerable time researching many aspects of the metropolitan area, including the legacy of the architects who designed the building in question.

In my view the Activities Building is a work of exceptional importance for several reasons. It represents a dramatic departure from traditional practices in the design of buildings for the mentally ill in both its openness and informality. It is likewise notable for domestic associations – reading more like a modernist house of the period than an institution. All these qualities are expressed with unusual sophistication and aplomb, making this a design of artistic distinction that at once arises out of, and transcends, its function.

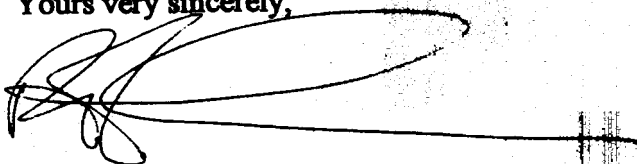
The building is further a superb example of a team of then relatively young architects who rank among the most talented ever to have practiced in the Washington area. Within a few years of its construction, Chloethiel Smith (briefly with Nicholas Satterlee) would start her own firm. Smith enjoyed national prominence as a designer of middle-class housing – in Southwest Washington, Reston, and elsewhere. At a time when the architectural profession was overwhelmingly male-dominated, hers was one of the

very few substantial firms to be headed by a female in the country. Indeed, not since Julia Morgan in San Francisco during the first decades of the century had a woman enjoyed such success in the field. After Smith's and Satterlee's departure, Keyes and Lethbridge continued as partners. Their firm likewise gained distinction locally and nationally and remains among the most distinguished in the region.

Within the local context of Rockville, and indeed of Montgomery County, the Activities Building is a truly exceptional example of avant-garde modernism from the postwar era. Its relation with the land, its sense of ones between indoors and out, its open plan, its use of materials and expression of structure its elegant proportions and modular rhythm, its sensitive use of scale – all contributing to making this a work of the first order – one of the finest of its genre to survive such good condition in the county, perhaps throughout Maryland. Some extraordinary houses were built in the county during this period, many of them by the same architects, but I am aware of nothing of comparable caliber for a public or institutional building.

The exceptional qualities of this building merit every effort to protect it for future generations. It is a very important part of Rockville's and Montgomery County's architectural heritage.

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Richard Longstreth', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard Longstreth  
Professor of American Civilization

cc: Larry Giammo, Mayor  
City Council

Received via email  
12/11/03

December 10, 2003

Anita Neal Powell  
Chair, Rockville City Historic District  
Rockville, Maryland

Dear Ms. Powell:

I am writing in support of the designation and preservation of the Activities Building on the Chestnut Lodge campus designed by Chlotiel Woodard Smith. As an architectural historian who has spent the last year studying the work of Smith's colleague, Charles M. Goodman, I know the invaluable contribution this daring woman made to spreading the tenets of Modern architecture throughout the Washington metropolitan area. It is impossible to read any scholarly work of mid-century Modernism in Washington without coming across Ms. Smith's name as one of the pioneers of the Contemporary style.

The Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge has all the hallmarks of an exemplary Contemporary building: transparent facades that invite an interchange between the interior and outdoors; easy access to the natural environment, with patios and an outdoor fireplace; wide eaves to provide for "passive solar" heating, wherein the interior is protected from excessive summer heat by coverage from roof overhangs; steel casement windows at the lower levels that allow large, clean "view walls" at eye-level; and modular construction wherein the system of assembly of the building is based on standardized unit construction, with Masonite panels and windows being interchangeable as required for the architectural program.

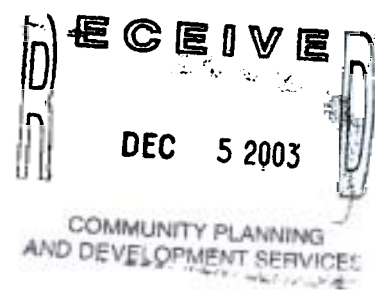
The building is also extremely valuable for its ability to demonstrate an architect's own approaches to expanding a building over time. The Activities Building manifests three periods of construction in the Modern idiom, all at the design hand of Ms. Smith herself. Only a few prominent Modernist buildings can demonstrate this; perhaps the most obvious of which, Dulles Airport's addition by Eero Saarinen, was only undertaken posthumously.

The Activities Building affords a precious opportunity to undertake one of the Secretary of the Interior's most important *Standards*: The ability to reuse a building for the purpose for which it was constructed. What better community center (or swimming pool club house) for a new residential enclave than a building that was built for recreation and eating to begin with?

In sum, it would be enormously disheartening should the Commission allow for the destruction of a completely usable building designed by one of Washington's premier Modernist architects. Please preserve the building and become one of the many preservation commissions across the country that is embracing the "Recent Past" and being applauded for the courage to do so.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Jo Lampl  
Architectural Historian



The City of Rockville Historic District Commission  
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville  
MD 20850

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND AT COLLEGE PARK  
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

December 10, 2003

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission

I am writing this short note to plead in favor of the preservation of the Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge. Last Spring, Peerless Rockville kindly asked if I could play M.C. for its annual award ceremony. In my introduction, I mentioned how Rockville's legacy from the "recent past" (1945-1970) is historically and architecturally significant, and therefore requires the kind of protection granted to older landmarks. Without false pretense, as lead researcher of a three-year project on Modern Movement architecture sponsored by the Maryland Historical Trust, I have become an expert on local modernism. Our team is writing National Register nominations of approximately fifteen modernist structures or groups of buildings. Among these is Chloethiel Woodard Smith's 1948 house located on 135 South Van Buren Street in Rockville, within walking distance of Chestnut Lodge. Ms. Smith was an outstanding architect and planner whose role in the evolution of "mid-century modernism" in the region and the country needs to be reassessed. I have spoken to many of her former colleagues and associates, who all agreed about her superior intellect and design ability. Although these are small structures, both the Van Buren house and the Activities Building are benchmarks in her career. The fact that Architectural Forum, one of the two or three most influential design journals of the period, published a long and very positive article on the Activities Building is compelling as well. Also please be reminded that in 1960, there was only one woman who was a registered architect in the state of Maryland (Helen Ross Staley, of Pasadena, whose output is much less compelling than that of Ms. Smith). Chloethiel Woodard Smith (registered in D.C.) played a major role in opening the way for greater participation of women in the design professions. We are preparing a traveling exhibition on Modern Architecture in Maryland, which will open at the University of Maryland in the fall of 2004. The Activities Building is definitely going to be mentioned and illustrated. It would be a shame that captions mention that what we consider as one of the very best examples of modernism in the Mid-Atlantic region is slated for demolition!

This letter may be brief but it is heartfelt. I was very much taken by the cheerfulness and quiet assertiveness of the Activities Building when I saw it two years and I have showed slides of this structure at every presentation I gave on our MHT project. This research has taught us that too many superior designs have been demolished or altered beyond recognition without any compelling reasons, especially as practitioners of adaptive reuse have reached an extraordinary level of competency. Please let this not happen again!

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information and testimony.

Yours truly,

Isabelle Gournay, M. Arch, Ph.D.

Associate Professor - ig9@umail.umd.edu - home phone 301-699 9418



# Recent Past Preservation Network

P.O. Box 1674, Arlington, Virginia 22210 | [www.recentpast.org](http://www.recentpast.org) | [info@recentpast.org](mailto:info@recentpast.org)

December 14, 2003

Historic District Commission  
City of Rockville  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

RECEIVED  
DEC 15 2003  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

RE: Chestnut Lodge Activities Building, by Keyes, Smith, Satterlee & Lethbridge

Dear Commissioners Powell, Broadhurst, Hartranft, Moloney, and Van Balgooy:

I am writing on behalf of the Recent Past Preservation Network (RPPN), an international, grassroots coalition of scholars working to develop greater public appreciation for historic buildings and sites of the recent past, particularly those of the last fifty years. Please enter this correspondence into the official record for the Commission meeting to be held on December 18, 2003.

We are very interested in the future of the Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge (designed by Chloethiel Woodard Smith, FAIA, of Keyes, Smith, Satterlee & Lethbridge, 1954-72) and feel any debates regarding the building's future should be undertaken with the utmost consideration for its place within the rapidly diminishing numbers of notable mid-century buildings in the Rockville area.

RPPN's nomination of the Activities Building for historic district designation in the City of Rockville is based on the provisions of Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland, and the City Zoning Ordinance. This building is an architecturally and culturally significant contributor to the community that deserves recognition and preservation. We ask that you recognize the intrinsic value of the Activities Building by recommending historic designation of the building to the Mayor and Council of Rockville.

As described in the attached summary, the Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge meets the following established criteria for City of Rockville historic designation:

## Historical and Cultural Significance

*Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Rockville, Montgomery County, Maryland, and the United States.*

*Is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society.*

*Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historical heritage of Montgomery County and its communities.*

## Architectural and Design Significance

*Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.*

*Represents the work of a master.*

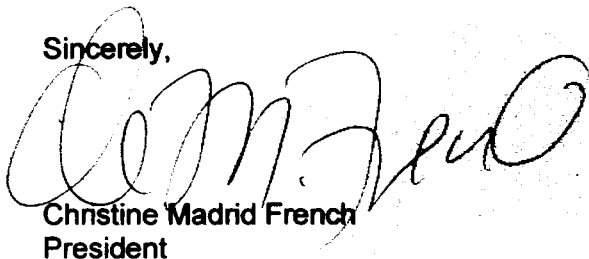
*Represents an established or familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.*

Careful consideration should be accorded to the future plans for the property as well. Satisfaction of modern code requirements, as well as the accommodation of changes in site usage, can be completed sensitively and effectively while maintaining the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association intended by Smith, et al., for the Activities Building. The building is eminently adaptable to new uses: the architect purposefully created a structure that reflected local community buildings, rather than residential or hospital architecture; removable exterior wall panels and moveable interior partitions allow the structure to be adapted to any number of modern configurations. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties includes guidelines for a rehabilitation project of this type.

Nationwide, architectural icons of the mid twentieth century are recognized and preserved by state and federal governments. The responsibility of protecting smaller sites that contributed to the evolution of a neighborhood or are manifestations of one person's vision for benefiting humanity, as was the hope of Dr. Dexter Bullard, Director of the Chestnut Lodge Sanitarium at the time, falls to community boards, commissions, and the people.

More and more, communities are facing the challenge to lead an informed debate about the value of structures from the recent past. We urge the Commission to move ahead slowly in this case and work ultimately towards the preservation of the Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge as an irreplaceable part of the history of mental health facilities in American and within the community of Rockville.

Sincerely,



Christine Madrid French  
President

Cc: Mayor & Council of Rockville  
Ms. Corri Jimenez

**THE ACTIVITIES BUILDING AT CHESTNUT LODGE IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**  
Statement of significance prepared by the Recent Past Preservation Network

The Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge meets the following established criteria for City of Rockville historic designation:

**Historical and Cultural Significance**

*Has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Rockville, Montgomery County, Maryland, and the United States*

The Activities Building represents a unique and rare building type designed by a master architect in collaboration with a leading institution in the field of mental health care and treatment. The Activities Center was designed as a medical/recreational/community center that successfully incorporated Chestnut Lodge's treatment philosophy.

The building was cited in a September 1955 article in *Architectural Forum* as an outstanding collaboration of client and architect and "should have great influence both as a specific facility and as an example of what architecture, given the chance, can do for medicine." This article provided positive national exposure for Smith's work, Bradley Karn (the builder), the Activities Building, Chestnut Lodge, and Rockville.

*Is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society*

Chestnut Lodge is known nationally and internationally for the innovative and quality treatment it provided. Chestnut Lodge was founded in the early twentieth century as a family business by Ernest Bullard, M.D. Three generations of Bullards served as its medical director. It was a pioneer in the intensive psychodynamic-psychotherapeutic treatment of serious mental illness, and two legendary psychiatrists-psychoanalysts—Frieda Fromm-Reichman, M.D., and Harry Stack Sullivan, M.D.—served on the Chestnut Lodge staff.

When the Activities Building was designed and built in 1954-55, Dexter Bullard Sr. was medical director and Frieda Fromm-Reichman was on staff (until she passed away in 1957). Both Bullard and Fromm-Reichman are two influential leaders with historical significance in the mental health field. In the biography, *To Redeem One Person is to Redeem the World: The Life of Frieda Fromm-Reichman*, author Gail Homstein describes Fromm-Reichman as having revolutionized psychiatry by demonstrating, both in the 1920's in Heidelberg, Germany, and in the 1940's and 1950's, at Chestnut Lodge Hospital outside Washington, D.C., that it was possible to create a therapeutic ambience where 'hopeless schizophrenics' got better. The Activities Building was designed in a manner consistent with Bullard's and Fromm-Reichman's philosophy.

The Activities Building was designed by architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith, FAIA, as partner in the firm of Keyes, Smith, Satterlee, & Lethbridge. Smith's influence as an architect is significant; two of her projects, Capitol Park in Southwest DC and Waterview Townhouses in Lake Anne Village in Reston, Virginia have achieved landmark designation in DC and Fairfax County, respectively. Her contributions to the profession, through design, writing, advocacy, and public service, influenced the public debate on urban planning and architecture in Washington, DC and throughout the nation. The *New Yorker* magazine, in a lengthy 1967 profile, called her "quite simply one of the best architects, planners, and thinkers about cities now working anywhere."

The Activities Building is the single remaining building that stands today built during the time when these three internationally-recognized leaders in their profession—Bullard, Fromm-Reichman, and Smith—were producing work at Chestnut Lodge representative of their philosophies. No other building on the Chestnut Lodge campus can trace its design and use to the influence of these three individuals who influenced society in significant ways.

*Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historical heritage of Montgomery County and its communities.*

The Activities Center is an early and increasingly rare cultural resource that exemplifies the major mid-20th century advances in architecture and health sciences. Rockville's proximity to National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and as a center for biotech research has defined much of its character and contributed to economic growth in recent decades.

Chestnut Lodge was a major influence in defining the community's leading role in health care services. Wayne Fenton, M.D., who held various positions at Chestnut Lodge between 1984 and 1997 in various positions (including medical director and CEO) and later with the National Institute of Mental Health, was quoted in the April 20, 2001 *Psychiatric News*, "Over the past 90 years Chestnut Lodge has both shaped and reflected changes in American psychiatry."

The Activities Center is an important, tangible example of Chestnut Lodge's leadership and innovation. The Activities Center is an early representation of post-World War II cultural, social, and economic progress in a city now known as "Home of the Genome."

## Architectural and Design Significance

### *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction*

The Activities Building is an excellent example of the modern movement in architecture that represented the optimism, progress and international influence of mid twentieth century America.

The Activities Building was recently identified as one of a few Rockville buildings having architectural significance in a Maryland Historical Trust-initiated survey of the Modern Movement in Maryland (MOMOMA), conducted by the University of Maryland. Initial MOMOMA research conducted by Dr. Isabelle Gournay and Dr. Mary Corbin Sies identified the building's architect as Chloethiel Woodard Smith, a critically-acclaimed modernist architect known for her humanist design philosophy. Further research by the Recent Past Preservation Network has affirmed the building's current integrity as consistent with mid twentieth century modernism.

The September 1955 issue of *Architectural Forum* describes structure as having "steel columns with open web steel joists...Columns are spaced to take stock 8' exterior wall panels and stock stash, for easy changes in the future. Glazing near the floor is translucent, colored, unbreakable plastic. Top sash is removable, leaving a screened ventilation band for the summer."

### *Represents the work of a master*

Chloethiel Woodard Smith, as architect for the Activities Building as well as other work at Chestnut Lodge, earned the reputation as one of America's most influential architects in mid twentieth century classic modern architecture and urban planning. When the Activities Building was completed by 1955, Smith was practicing as a founding partner with the architectural firm Keyes, Smith, Satterlee and Lethbridge.

Smith's humanist philosophy and contributions to American architecture and planning is substantiated by the great body of work she produced. She had a reputation for sensible and innovative urban planning and was a respected authority on contemporary city planning and large-scale community housing. Jayne Lisbeth Doud, in a 1994 thesis, "Chloethiel Woodard Smith, FAIA: Washington Urban Gem," wrote that Smith was influenced by Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, and expanded on concepts for urban residential living in natural settings, utilizing open green space and common pathways for access and egress between buildings of different scales.

Smith's influence on the mid twentieth century design in the Washington area is significant. Through her work in the Washington, DC area and across the United States, Smith developed a reputation as one of America's most influential architects. The *New Yorker*, in a 1967 profile called Smith "quite simply one of the best architects, planners, and thinkers about cities now working anywhere."

She was responsible for significant project commissions, including commissions at Chestnut Lodge that spanned a twenty year period. She was selected to serve on various committees that influenced the shaping of post-World War II Washington, DC. In addition to her work at Chestnut Lodge, she designed Harbour Square in Southwest Washington, the National Airport Metro station and the Waterview Townhouses in Reston, some of which have spiral steps that descend into a lake. At a key intersection in downtown Washington – the corner of Connecticut Avenue and I Street NW – Smith designed three of the four office buildings there; architects and critics have referred to the intersection as "Chloethiel's Corner." In addition, she helped save the old Pension Building in Northwest Washington; it now houses



the National Building Museum. In 1989, the Washington chapter of the American Institute of Architects awarded her its Centennial Award for "continuous service to the chapter, the community and the profession."

Smith also designed and built large residential projects in Boston and St. Louis, and was an influence on other architects as a member of the Fine Arts Commission, an independent federal agency, from 1967 to 1976.

Though she has been described as influential, was cited with honors, and completed significant architectural projects and writings, (see "Fact Sheet on Chloethiel Woodard Smith") Chloethiel Woodard Smith's name is not as well-known by the general public as those of her contemporaries, due in part to gender bias of the time. Nonetheless, she is considered to be a master whose successful career spanned five decades.

*Represents an established or familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.*

The Chestnut Lodge campus is a familiar landscape in Rockville that dates at least to 1888 when the Woodlawn Hotel was built. The vistas from West Montgomery Avenue communicate the look and feel of a campus. An integral part of the campus for nearly fifty years, the Activities Building is notable for how it represents the scale, massing, and siting of mid twentieth century modernism.

The September 1955 Architectural Forum described the Activities Building as "a community center that would not be out of place on a campus or in a fortunate town, although unobtrusively it is most carefully designed for its special function and future expansion." The building was designed not to overpower, but to assimilate with surrounding buildings as part of campus that has been a familiar part of Rockville's landscape for more than ninety years. The Activities Building's design and integration with the surrounding landscape render it as a distinctive and recognizable element of the campus.

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COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

The health facility that helped patients by giving more convenience to the staff . . . the structural clear span that cost a lot but saved still more and why . . . the spacious clinic on a narrow lot . . .

## SEVEN HEALTH BUILDINGS

Every architect has met clients whose declared purposes are wonderful but whose specific demands, point by point, will carry them off in a totally different direction.

And of all clients who exhibit this maddening discrepancy, medical men are the most maddening. They are used to having "laymen" (and to them the architect is a "layman") follow their orders faithfully and even worshipfully, without arguing. They have a wonderful fund of intimidating jargon and special knowledge. In short, they are experts not only in their professional field, but in the art of being one up on the other fellow.

Not surprisingly, the medical client often fails to get the best out of his architect or the best out of his building. A review of a great many current hospitals and medical buildings amounts to a disillusioning course in the timid, the humdrum, the inconsistent and the thoughtless. Very sad, since these qualities do not characterize the practice of medicine itself.

But every so often a medical building turns up that measures up to the thinking in the profession that will use it. Lately, special medical buildings provide more of these happy surprises than do hospitals. Behind these good buildings is always a medical or administrative client who was willing to listen to, and respect, his architect—and an architect who knows what it means to dig in and research what his client is *talking* about, as well as what has been done.

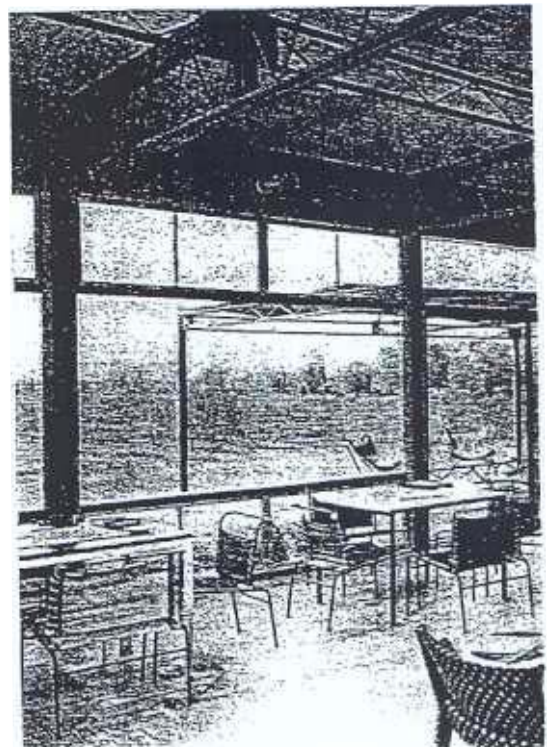
The seven medical buildings presented here are the results of this kind of collaboration. Perhaps the outstanding one (Chestnut Lodge center by Architects Keyes, Smith, Satterlee & Lethbridge, opp.) happens to be a mental hospital facility. This is the medical environment most difficult of all for the architectural "layman" to analyze and recreate. But it was done here, and this job should have great influence both as a specific facility and as an example of what architecture, given the chance, can do for medicine.

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Lounge includes library, sedentary games





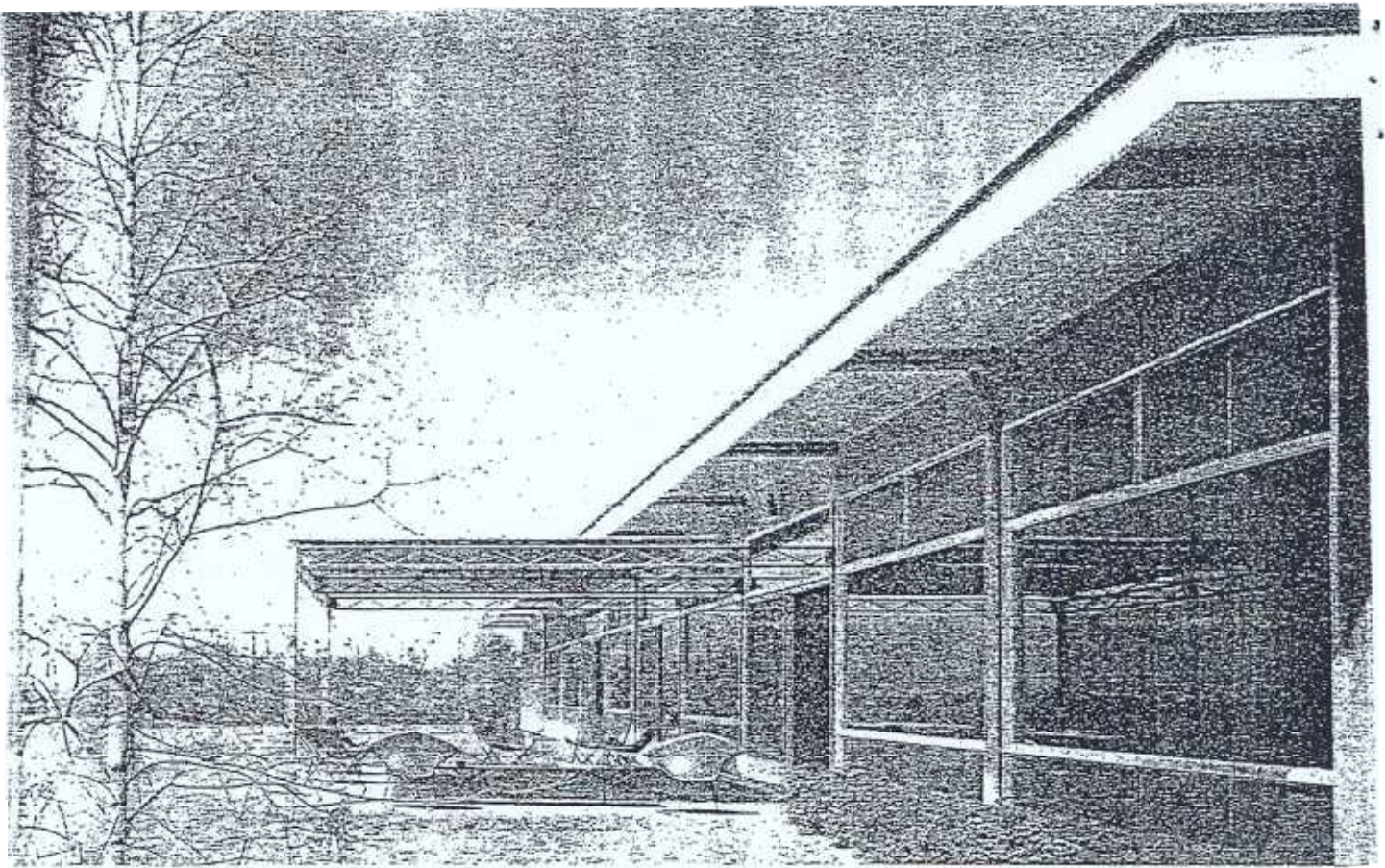


Photo: © Ezra Stoller

Shaded terrace opens off south wall of lounge

## A NORMAL BUILDING FOR RESTORING MENTAL PATIENTS TO NORMAL LIFE



"When we first discussed this building, we had quite different ideas," says Dr. Dexter M. Bullard, medical director of this private mental hospital, most of whose patients are schizophrenic. "But the architects persisted in questioning what we wanted, what use would be made of the building, to the degree that finally their conception of its style and function seemed to be so valid for this kind of a building that we readily acceded to their plans."

This is the first wing of a recreational, social and occupational-therapy building group, and what the client originally had in mind was the usual therapy building, a decidedly clinical institution. Instead the wing turned out to be a community center that would not be out of place on a campus or in a fortunate town, although unobtrusively it is most carefully designed for its special function and future expansion.

The architects' unusual conception of a community center did not arise from refusal to heed the client's wishes. Quite the contrary. They heeded him in his own field. They studied his aims and methods of treatment, they zealously researched the

pertinent psychiatric writings, and they concluded that their client's thinking was utterly at variance with the architectural solutions he was taking for granted.

The client wanted patients to be drawn to the building, rather than urged or invited, and not to fear it or feel trapped once they were inside. He wanted them to "choose freely" from a range of activities. He wanted it to help put them in touch again with other persons and with normal life.

To the architects this meant, foremost, a "normal" seeming building, and an inviting one. It meant obvious and easy exits, emphasized by terraces. It meant retreats and transition spaces, where patients not yet ready for activity could watch others; a refreshment counter to stimulate the highly social act of sharing food; openness to adjoining lawns and sports to lure the patient into games; a well-defined module for a reassuring sense of order.

The architects also questioned major emphasis on a gymnasium, which has been postponed to a later stage of building; they suggested that the mild Maryland



climate invited normal outdoor community sports. They made the deduction, which the client accepted, that if patients were to "choose freely" they had better be provided with choices not necessarily the same as those they would pick in normal life, but from a range that does reflect their normal culture. The patients here include a high proportion of professional and executive people, but for patients from other strata of life the same reasoning would presumably apply.

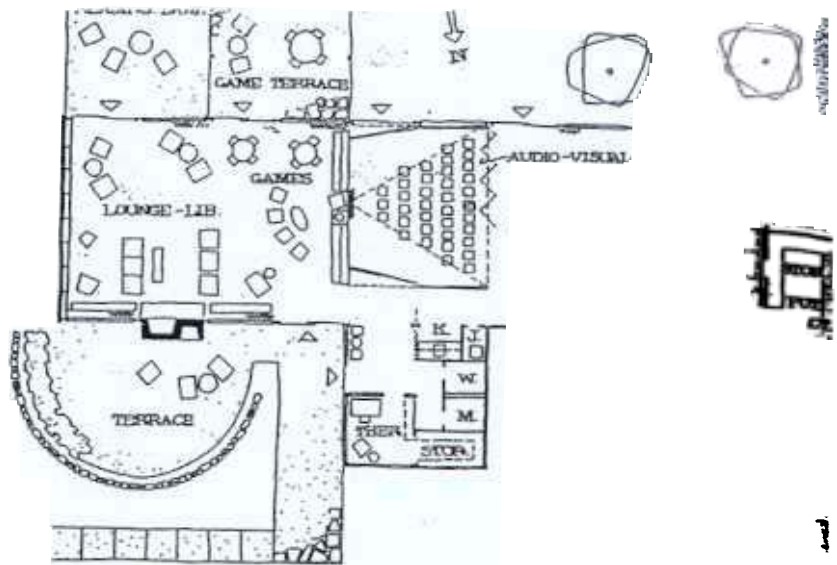
The architects also applied common sense to the confused subject of institutional vs. "homelike" architecture: "No large group facility can ever recreate the small-group scale of the family. No hospital can be a 'home.' What it can be is a community. It seems 'normal' that workshops, libraries, gymnasiums, etc. look like good community schools or centers rather than like houses. . . . The 'normal' standards must come from the normal community, not from the hospital."

The client reports the building does draw patients and has become a center to a greater degree even than anticipated. "It has also become a center of activity for out-patients, who formerly were much of the time at loose ends. . . . The patients' interests have developed to such a degree that they now manage the activities budget which they prepare and present to the budget committee of the hospital for approval. The patients' planning committee fully controls these funds."

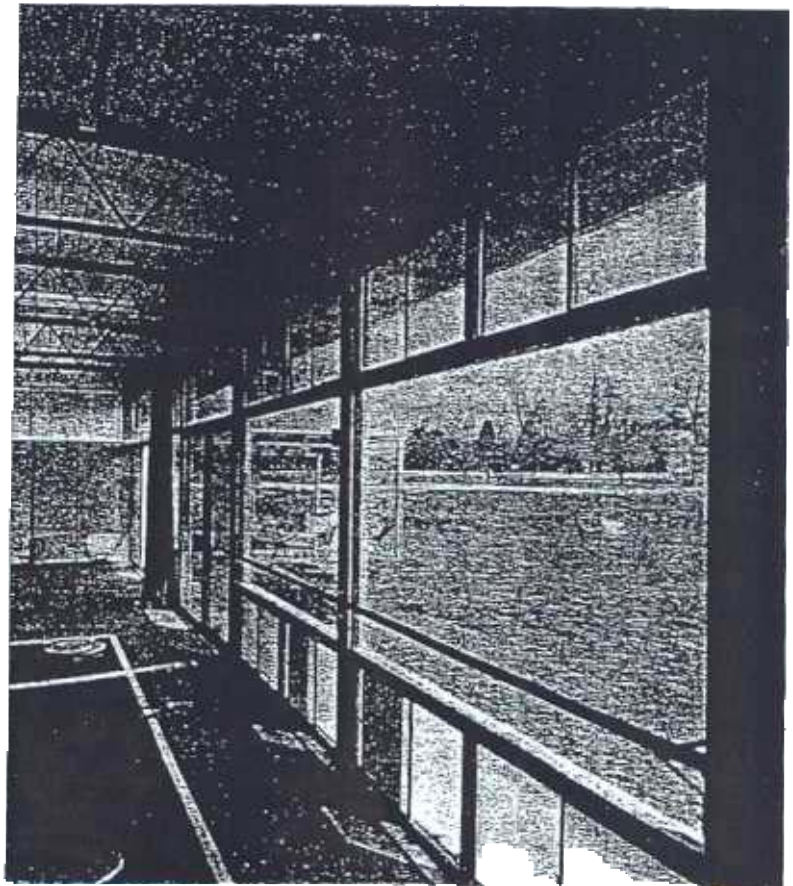
Structure is steel columns with open-web steel joists. (Inexpensive, these do tend to complicate the overhead view.) Columns are spaced to take stock 8' exterior wall panels and stock sash, for easy changes in future. "Glazing" near the floor is translucent, colored, unbreakable plastic. Top sash is removable, leaving a screened ventilation band for summer. Construction cost, not including fees, was \$32,000; \$11 per sq. ft.

**CHESTNUT LODGE THERAPY BUILDING WING**  
LOCATION: Rockville, Md.

ARCHITECTS: Keyes, Smith, Satterlee & Lethbridge  
STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT: J. Gibson Wilson Jr.  
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Bradley C. Karn



Plan divides activities building for population of 75 patients, 35 out-patients, into three zones with reading, card games, chatting in one area; television, radio and music recording in another; active games, dance practice, psychodrama in the third, with individual rooms for music and typing practice. Therapist's office is control point. Only permanent interior partitions are those of small, sound-treated practice rooms. Exterior wall at therapist's office is temporary for future expansion (see long-range plan). View along multipurpose room (below) shows emphasis on easy exit.



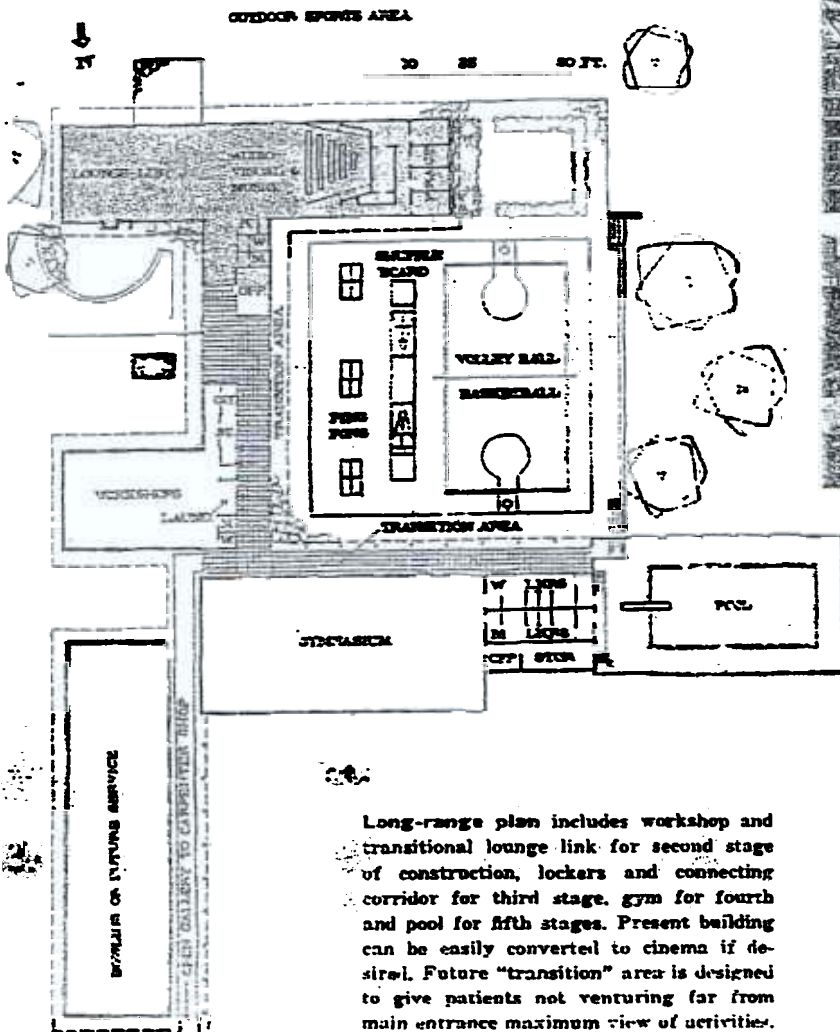
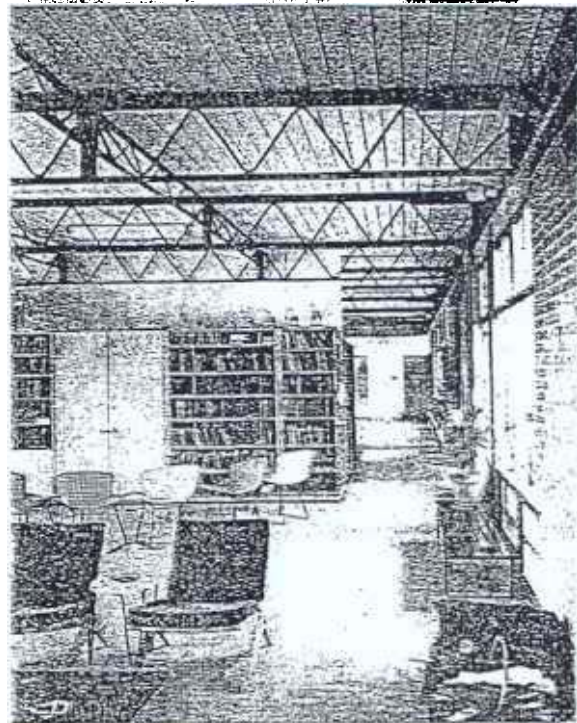


PLACE  
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PLACE



Placemat 9: Room Sketch

Exterior wall panels are removable for future changes. View above is north wall. Stone wall in foreground is patients' project. View at right from lounge looks into lobby and multipurpose room beyond.



Long-range plan includes workshop and transitional lounge link for second stage of construction, lockers and connecting corridor for third stage, gym for fourth and pool for fifth stages. Present building can be easily converted to cinema if desired. Future "transition" area is designed to give patients not venturing far from main entrance maximum view of activities.



Courtesy Helen Kesper

## Facts About Chloethiel Woodard Smith, FAIA

*In the past, everything took time. A place was a matter of slow accretion, and accumulation of what all sorts of people did and said over the years. Now in order to oppose the fast accretion that's happening all up and down the coast, we're going to have to build whole cities from scratch...It frightens me. It's like screwing in a whole set of new light bulbs at once—they're all liable to go out at once....We have to plan this sort of thing.*

Quote by Chloethiel Woodard Smith, published in the article, "Profiles: Through the Great City III," by Anthony Bailey, *New Yorker*, August 1967, page 60.

1932 Bachelor of Architecture, University of Oregon  
 1933 Masters of Architecture in City Planning, Washington University  
 1940 City for Living Exhibit, Montreal Canada  
 1944 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship  
 1951 German Building Exposition, Hanover, Germany  
 1954-55 Activities Building, Chestnut Lodge, Rockville, MD  
 1960 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Fellow  
 1960 Award of Merit, AIA  
 1963 President's Advisory Council on Pennsylvania Avenue  
 1965 First Lady's Committee for Beautification of the Nations Capital  
 1965 AIA Pan American Congress Committee Chairman  
 1967-68 President's National Committee on Urban Problems  
 1967-76 National Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, DC  
 Architects Advisory Committee, National Capital Downtown Commission, Inc.  
 Design Review Panel, Boston Redevelopment Agency  
 Jury Member, House Awards AIA National Association Home Builders  
 Trustee Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation  
 American Institute of Planners  
 American Planners and Civic Association, Member  
 Committee of 100 on the Federal City  
 Washington Building Congress, Planning and Housing Association

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AND DEVELOPMENT SERV

In 1960, Chloethiel Woodard Smith was inducted as a Fellow into the American Institute of Architects, the sixth woman so honored.

Founding Trustee of the National Building Museum. Smith was influential in proposing a national museum celebrating buildings and architecture and successfully proposed the renovation of the Pension Building to serve as home to the National Building Museum.

By 1967, Chloethiel Woodard Smith ran the largest female-run architectural firm in the United States.

At the end of her career in the late 1980s, nearly 30% of architects working in Washington, DC had come through her office. The percentage would be much higher if the firms that she was a partner in are included. Notable architects Arthur Cotton Moore and Hugh Newell Jacobsen worked for her.

Career spanned five decades from mid 1930s to 1980s.

Smith's architecture was featured in Trade journals, The AIA guide to Washington, DC Architecture and popular press, including Business Week, Fortune, and daily newspapers. A select bibliography of articles written about Smith include:

"She Makes the City a place for living." Business Week, 3 June 1967, 76-80  
 Von Eckardt, Wolf. "That Exceptional One." The Washingtonian, September 1988, 79-80  
 Willis, Beverly, FAIA. "Tribute." National Building Museum Blueprints XI, no. (Spring 1993): 15  
 McLendon, Winzola. "Architect Designs No Ivory Towers." The Washington Post, 30 July 1967, E1, E5  
 Forgey, Benjamin. "On Chloethiel's Corner." Washington Post, 1 January 1993, D1, D8  
 Bailey, Anthony. "Profiles: through the Great City III." New Yorker, August 1967, 59-63

She was also an author of note. Her writings about urban planning were published in professional journals.



*Partial List of Projects (dates known)*

1955-59 AMERICAN EMBASSY, Asuncion, Paraguay, Chancery and residence  
1955-75 CHESTNUT LODGE MENTAL HOSPITAL AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, Rockville, MD  
1958-68 CAPITOL PARK APARTMENTS AND TOWNHOUSES, Southwest, Washington, DC  
1960-62 WASHINGTON CHANNEL WATERFONT MASTER PLAN, Washington, DC  
1961-62 BROOK HOUSE, Brookline, MA  
1962-68 HARCOURT, BRACE, AND WORLD, INC., New York, NY, Bookstore and Executive Offices  
1962 E STREET EXPRESSWAY, 23rd to 19th Avenues, Washington, DC  
1962 CROWN TOWER, New Haven, CT  
1962-65 LA CLEDE TOWN, St. Louis, MO  
1962-65 WATERVIEW TOWNHOUSES, Reston, VA  
1964 ONONDAGA LAKE MASTER PLAN, Onondaga County, New York  
1964 SHAW SCHOOL, Washington, DC  
1964-66 1100 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, Washington, DC Office Building  
1964-66 BLAKE BUILDING, 1025 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, DC  
1964-71 WATERSIDE-TOWN CENTER, Washington, DC  
1965-66 WASHINGTON CHANNEL BRIDGE (PONTE VECCHIO), Washington, DC, Shopping Bridge  
1965 SKYLINE STUDY, Washington, DC  
1965 ST. ANDREWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, College Park, MD  
1965 MISSISSIPPI DELTA FEASIBILITY STUDY  
1965-66 F STREET PLAZA, Washington, DC  
1965-67 HARBOUR SQUARE APARTMENTS AND TOWNHOUSES, Washington, DC  
1966 PENSION BUILDING, Washington, DC, New Use Study  
1966 SPA CREEK, Annapolis, MD Townhouse group  
1967 AVERNE, Borough of Queens, NY, Master Plan for Seven Towns on the Oceafront  
1969 WILDE LAKE HIGH RISE, Columbia, MD  
1969-70 CONSOLIDATED FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING, Beltsville, MD  
1970 UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, Rochester, NY  
1970-71 INTOWN, Rochester, NY  
1971 NATIONAL AIRPORT METRO STATION, Arlington County, VA  
1973 DC ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN, OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING CENTER, Washington, DC  
1967-88 WASHINGTON SQUARE, Washington, DC

*Partial List of Projects (dates unknown)*

CROOKED LAKE, Tully, NY, Residential Community Master Plan  
CROSSROADS SOUTH GARAGE, Rochester, NY  
FALLS HILL, Columbia, MD  
FLETCHER-JOHNSON SCHOOL, Washington, DC  
FORT WASHINGTON MARINA FEASIBILITY STUDY, Prince Georges County, MD  
FRIENDSHIP TERRACE, Washington, DC Elderly Housing  
GALLAUDET COLLEGE STUDENT UNION AND ELY HALL RENOVATION, Washington, DC  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER, Washington, DC, Chancery Complex  
MAINE AVENUE APARTMENTS, Washington, DC  
MARSHALL HALL MASTER PLAN, Charles County, MD Proposed New Town  
RESIDENCE AND STABLE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD for Mr. & Mrs. Willmott Lewis, Sr.  
SOUTHEAST LOOP MASTER PLAN, Rochester, NY  
SOUTHWEST FREEWAY (I-395)  
TOWN SQUARE, Washington, DC, Urban Commercial Complex  
TOWNSEND TOWER, Syracuse, NY  
WEEKEND HOUSE, Fairfax, VA, for Col. & Mrs. Julius Wadsworth  
WEEKEND RESIDENCE, Winchester, MD, for Dr. & Mrs. Dexter Bullard

## APPENDIX A

## LIST OF PROJECTS, DATES KNOWN

1955-59 AMERICAN EMBASSY, Asuncion, Paraguay, Chancery and Residence

1955-75 CHESTNUT LODGE MENTAL HOSPITAL AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, Rockville, Maryland, Various Facilities

1958-68 CAPITOL PARK APARTMENTS AND TOWNHOUSES, Southwest Washington, D.C.

1960-62 WASHINGTON CHANNEL WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN, Washington, D.C.

1961-62 BROOK HOUSE, Brookline, Massachusetts

1962-68 HARCOURT, BRACE, AND WORLD, INC., New York, New York, Bookstore and Executive Offices

'E' STREET EXPRESSWAY, 23rd to 19th Avenues, Washington, D.C.

1962 CROWN TOWER, New Haven, Connecticut

1962-65 LA CLEDE TOWN, St. Louis, Missouri

1962-65 WATERVIEW TOWNHOUSES, Reston, Virginia

1964 ONONDAGA LAKE MASTER PLAN, Onondaga County, New York

SHAW SCHOOL, Washington, D.C.

1964-66 1100 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, Washington, D.C., Office Building and Various Tenants

1964-66 BLAKE BUILDING, 1025 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C., Office Building and Various Tenants

- 1964-71 WATERSIDE-TOWN CENTER, Washington, D.C.
- 1965-66 WASHINGTON CHANNEL BRIDGE, (Ponte Vecchio),  
Washington, D.C., Shopping Bridge
- SKYLINE STUDY, Washington, D.C
- ST. ANDREWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, College Park  
Maryland
- 1965 MISSISSIPPI DELTA FEASIBILITY STUDY
- 1965-66 'F' STREET PLAZA, Washington, D.C.; two-block  
pedestrian promenade
- 1965-67 HARBOUR SQUARE APARTMENTS AND TOWNHOUSES,  
Southwest, Washington, D.C.
- PENSION BUILDING, Washington, D.C., New Use Study
- RICH'S SHOE STORE, Washington, D.C
- 1966 SPA CREEK, Annapolis, Maryland, Townhouse group
- 1967 ARVERNE, Borough of Queens, New York, Master Plan  
for Seven Towns on the Oceanfront
- WILDE LAKE HIGH RISE, Columbia, Maryland
- 1969-70 CONSOLIDATED FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING  
CENTER, Beltsville, Maryland
- 1970 UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, Rochester, New York
- 1970-71 INTOWN, Rochester, New York, Master Plan
- 1971 NATIONAL AIRPORT METRO STATION, Arlington County,  
Virginia
- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED  
CHILDREN- OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING CENTER, Washington,  
D.C.
- 1987-88 WASHINGTON SQUARE, Washington, D.C Office Building

#### LIST OF PROJECTS, DATES UNKNOWN

CROOKED LAKE, Tully, New York, Residential Community Master  
Plan

CROSSROADS SOUTH GARAGE, Rochester, New York

FALLS HILL, Columbia, Maryland, Apartment Building

FLETCHER-JOHNSON SCHOOL, Washington, D.C

FORT WASHINGTON MARINA FEASIBILITY STUDY; Prince  
George County, Maryland

FRIENDSHIP TERRACE, Washington, D.C., Elderly Housing

GALLAUDET COLLEGE STUDENT UNION AND ELY HALL RENOVATION,  
Washington, D.C.

INTERNATIONAL CENTER, Washington, D.C., Chancery Complex

MAINE AVENUE APARTMENTS, Washington, D.C

MARSHALL HALL MASTER PLAN, Charles County, Maryland,  
Proposed New Town

RESIDENCE AND STABLE, Montgomery County, Maryland, for Mr  
and Mrs. Willmott Lewis, Jr.

SOUTHEAST LOOP MASTER PLAN, Rochester, New York

SOUTHWEST FREEWAY I-395)

TOWN SQUARE, Washington, D.C., Urban Commercial Complex

TOWNSEND TOWER, Syracuse, New York

WEEKEND HOUSE, Fairfax, Virginia, for Col and Mrs. Julius  
Wadsworth

WEEKEND RESIDENCE, Winchester, Maryland, for Dr. and Mrs.  
Dexter Ballard

## APPENDIX B

## MEMBERSHIPS, HONORS AND COMMITTEES

City for Living Exhibit, Montreal, Canada

1944 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship

1951 German Building Exposition, Hanover, Germany

1960 AIA Fellow

1960 Recipient Award of Merit, AIA (for Capitol Park)

1963 President's Advisory Council on Pennsylvania Avenue

1965 First Lady's Committee for Beautification of the Nations Capital

1967-68 President's National Committee on Urban Problems

AIA Pan American Congress Committee Chairman

1967-76 National Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C

Architects Advisory Committee, National Capital Downtown Commission, Inc.

Design Review Panel Boston Redevelopment Agency

Jury Member House Awards AIA National Association Home Builders

Trustee Fred L Lavanburg Foundation

American Institute of Planners, member

American Planning and Civic Association, member

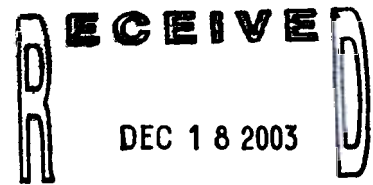
Committee of 100 on the Federal City

Washington Building Congress, Planning and Housing Association

829 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20024-3105  
18 December 2003

Historic District Commission  
City of Rockville  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville MD 20850

Fax. Rec  
Dec 18, 2003  
jmc



COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Re: Evaluation for Historical, Architectural or Cultural Significance, Chloethiel  
Woodard Smith Activities Building, Chestnut Lodge

Letter sent VIA FACSIMILE on (240) 314-8210

Commissioners Powell, Broadhurst, Hartranft, Moloney and Van Balgoov:

I wish to express my strong support for designating the Chloethiel Woodard Smith Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge (also referred to as the Health Building) a building of historical, architectural and cultural significance.

I am first vice president of the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, as well as a resident of Southwest Washington and member of the board of the Capitol Park II complex, one of the major residential projects that Ms. Smith designed as part of the redevelopment of Southwest Washington in the 1950s and 1960s. Although I am not an architect by training, I am one of the citizens who helped secure historic landmark status earlier this year for the Potomac Place Apartments (which Ms. Smith also helped build). That task that has given me insight into Ms. Smith's mid-century work.

Having read the document that the Historic District Commission will review at its December meeting regarding the activities building, I see important similarities between the building and Capitol Park. Both sit low to the ground (my development has two- and three-story townhouses). Both possess similar architectural touches, like flat roofs, open floor plans and floor-to-ceiling windows that Ms. Smith specifically designed to incorporate the minimalist approach to modern architecture that was prevalent in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

But what's most striking to me about the activities building is the relationship with nature that Ms. Smith sought to bring to patients in the activities building. In the Capitol Park development, Ms. Smith experimented with noted landscape architect Dan Kiley and children's book author Leo Lionni to incorporate modern architecture, nature and art into a pleasing, award-winning design. The amenities of the plan - including a beautiful park, art mosaics and a reflecting pool with fountains - were all designed to provide the best of city living for Southwest residents.

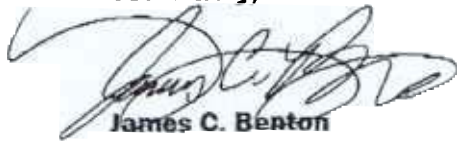
In reading the description of the Chestnut Lodge and activities building, it shows me that many of the same characteristics are also evident in the building: the use of design elements to encourage patients to embrace the outdoors, rather than fear it - in a



sense, to encourage the patient to "open up" – as well as minimal ornamentation, and the use of modernist styles as influenced by Le Corbusier, van der Rohe, Neutra and Johnson. As a layman, it is interesting, and pleasantly surprising, to note the presence of the same aesthetic approach – encouraging a communion with nature – in the design of both a Rockville mental facility and a middle-class housing complex in Washington.

For that reason, the Chestnut Lodge and Activities Building represents a unique example of mid-century, modern architecture that sought help its patients become productive members of the society to which they would one day return. Because the activities building represents the only such example of mid-century modern architecture in an institutional setting in Rockville, I restate my support for designating it a building of historical, architectural and cultural significance. It is a treasure that current and future citizens of Rockville can be proud of.

Yours truly,



James C. Benton

Cc: Mayor Larry Giammo (via e-mail)  
Councilmember Robert E. Dorsey (via e-mail)  
Councilmember John F. Hall Jr. (via e-mail)  
Councilmember Susan R. Hoffman (via e-mail)  
Councilmember Anne M. Robbins (via e-mail)

**JACK C. COHEN, F.A.I.A.  
7000 CRAIL DRIVE  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20817-4726**

*exhibit 1 of 200*  
*rec*  
*JAC*

**DATE**

<b>1949</b>	Graduated Catholic University of America Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Architectural Engineering Elected to Membership in Sigma XI
<b>1949-1952</b>	Worked for Ronald Senseman, F.A.I.A.
<b>1952</b>	Passed my Registration Exam Washington, D.C. Subsequently became registered in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Delaware, North Carolina, Florida, California, Tennessee and Georgia
<b>1952-1954</b>	Established Northwood Park Development Company and built 110 single family homes in Montgomery County
<b>1953</b>	Went into practice as Jack C. Cohen, A.I.A.
<b>1954-1974</b>	Joined with Leonard A. Haft and established the firm Cohen and Haft Architects
<b>1971-1972</b>	Chairman of the National Housing Committee of the A.I.A.
<b>1973</b>	Elected to the College of Fellows A.I.A.
<b>1975-1999</b>	With the growth of the firm to 150 staff members, Cohen and Haft evolved to the firm name CHK Architects
<b>1999</b>	Retired from position Chairman of the Board CHK Architects
<b>1999-2002</b>	C.E. Smith Residential Director of Architecture
<b>2003-Present</b>	Architectural Consultant



The following is a list of some of the projects designed, by my firm, in the Rockville area:

Jewish Community Center, Rockville, Maryland  
Beni Israel Synagogue, Rockville, Maryland  
Hebrew Homes I and II, Rockville, Maryland  
Asbury Methodist Village (Elderly Care), Gaithersburg, Maryland  
Somerset I, II and III Condominiums, Chevy Chase, Maryland  
Fallswood Condominiums, Rockville, Maryland  
Maplewood Retirement Facility, Bethesda, Maryland  
Azalea Gardens Townhouse Community, Rockville, Maryland  
Rockshire Single Family, Rockville, Maryland  
Tildon Woods, Rockville, Maryland  
College View Garden Apartments, Rockville, Maryland  
Rollins Park Apartments, Rockville, Maryland  
Old Georgetown Village Townhouse and Apartments, Rockville, Maryland  
Montgomery Community College, Rockville, Maryland  
Montgomery Community College, Germantown, Maryland  
Lutheran Home for Greater Washington, Rockville, Maryland

I'm Wayne Goldstein, President of Montgomery Preservation, Inc., Montgomery County's umbrella preservation advocacy organization. We're here tonight to testify in support of the designation of one of the most architecturally significant buildings in the City of Rockville and perhaps Montgomery County, personally designed by one of America's foremost mid-twentieth century architects, Chloethiel Woodard Smith, a fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

The staff report of the City of Rockville's HDC staff meticulously describes the importance of both the architect and her building. Letters from Professor Richard Longstreth of George Washington University, Associate Professor Isabelle Gournay of the University of Maryland, Architectural Historian Elizabeth Jo Lampl, all experts in the architects and architecture of the mid-20th century variously described as International Style, Mid-Century Modern, or Contemporary Style, are unanimous in their professional judgment of the importance of the architect and this particular project. The Recent Past Preservation Network has provided its own Statement of Significance detailing the importance of the architect and this project and have also backed up their position by providing a lengthy list of the projects that encompass the body of work of Chloethiel Woodard Smith.

I know of only two other resources in Montgomery County that have received such broad scholarly and professional support for designation, the Silver Theater and Shopping Center and the Canada Dry Bottling Plant. The designation of the theater and shopping center were challenged by others based on claims of too many alterations, including the loss of architecturally significant elements, and that there were better examples in the larger community. The designation of the bottling plant was challenged based on claims that it was one of a number of similar buildings and that the architects had done better buildings.

In the case of the Activities Building, we know that the architect personally designed this building, that it was specifically designed for its particular use, that it was hailed and celebrated when it was built, and that it is unaltered, except with later additions also supervised by the architect. In fact, because these later additions were done by the original architect, one of the professionals who supports the designation, Elizabeth Jo Lampl, writes: "Only a few prominent Modernist buildings can demonstrate this; perhaps the most obvious of which, Dulles Airport's addition by Eero Saarinen, was only undertaken posthumously."

There is no question that the Activities Building overwhelmingly meets the City of Rockville's designation criteria. The only questions to answer are why the nomination has come forth at this time and how this building, once designated, can be successfully reused in ways that preserve the building and also allows for the success of the proposed new residential construction in the vicinity of this building.

In her letter dated 12/10/03, Dr. Gournay writes: "Last Spring, Peerless Rockville kindly asked if I could play M.C. for its annual award ceremony. In my introduction, I mentioned how Rockville's legacy from the 'recent past' (1945-1970) is historically and architecturally significant, and therefore requires the kind of protection granted to older landmarks." About two years ago, the Mayor and Council of Rockville committed breathtakingly significant sums of money just to complete the survey and evaluation of its historic resources. Unfortunately, despite these important efforts and notices, this particular building did not come to official attention until now.

As to reuses of the building, there are a number of meaningful possibilities available, ranging from a new life as the community center it has been, to becoming a grand residence, to being part home, part distinctive bed-and-breakfast, part home-based catering business. The designation and reuse should not prevent the proposed new project from moving forward, and the financial impact of the designation and reuse can be expected to be more positive than negative.

The HDC knows of my continuing effort to save Rockville's Park Street Elementary by doing extensive research on the architect, Howard Wright Cutler. While my effort has not been successful to date, I am gratified to learn that Chloethiel Woodard Smith designed the 1965 addition to St. Andrews Episcopal Church in College Park, the original building having been designed by Cutler in 1930. I also note that Cutler's daughter and architectural partner, Katherine Cutler Ficken, was a feminist pioneer in her own right as the first woman architect licensed by the state of Maryland and that she was a contemporary of Smith.

*Received Dec 18, 2003*

*Exhibit. JH*

*Act*



Testimony before the City of Rockville Historic District Commission

Submitted by John Hartranft, December 18, 2003



Good evening. My name is John Hartranft, a resident of Rockville who has worked on historic preservation issues at the neighborhood, city, county, and state level in various capacities during the past 10 years. Tonight I speak as the Maryland representative of the Recent Past Preservation Network.

RPPN is an international grassroots coalition of scholars and advocates working to develop greater public appreciation for historic buildings and sites of the recent past, particularly of the last fifty years. This building is fairly unique for us in that it is reaching its fifty year mark in two weeks. It's an old building for us.

We are very interested in the future of the Activities Building at Chestnut Lodge and believe that any debates regarding the building's future should be undertaken with the utmost consideration for its place within the rapidly diminishing numbers of notable mid-century buildings in the Rockville area. The new information that is before you tonight has not been fully considered in your deliberations or in any previous public forum. It deserves our attention....finally!

12/18/03  
to John Hartranft  
Re: Activities Bldg  
Designation  
Study

The building is an architecturally and culturally significant contributor to the community that deserves recognition and preservation. We ask that you recognize the intrinsic value of the Activities Building by recommending historic designation of the building to the Mayor and Council of Rockville.

As described in our statement of significance and letters of testimony, Activities Building meets multiple criteria for City of Rockville historic designation. And, the building is eminently adaptable to new uses: Chloethiel Woodard Smith purposefully created a structure that reflected local community buildings, rather

than residential or hospital structure; It has removeable exterior wall panels and moveable interior partitions to allow the structure to be adapted to any number of modern configurations. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties includes guidelines for a rehabilitation project of this type.

Nationwide, architectural icons of the mid twentieth century are recognized and preserved by state and federal governments. The responsibility of protecting smaller sites that contributed to the evolution of a neighborhood or small city—or are the manifestations of someone's vision for benefiting society—falls to community boards, commissions, and the people.

More and more, communities are facing the challenge to lead an informed debate about the value of structures from the mid twentieth century. You have before you tonight the first comprehensive set of documents, letters, and testimony regarding the building's significance. If/when at a later date a demolition permit were to be requested for this building, we would be going through the process then. We are pleased that this is happening now rather than after plans have already been submitted.

This is one the first of its kind in a series of evaluations that will look seriously at our best historic resources from the post-World war II era in a context that Rockville and other leading communities are beginning to understand and better appreciate.

Because one of Rockville's—and Maryland's— most significant buildings of the modern movement is also the first of its type to be evaluated' we all must consider this case carefully and completely, with the public and the process well-informed. We urge the Commission to move ahead in this case and work ultimately towards the preservation of the Activities Building.

From: Pat Reber  
705 New Mark Esplanade  
Rockville, Md. 20850

301 424 8164

To: City of Rockville, Historic District Commission  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Md. 20850

December 18, 2003



To the members of the Historic District Commission, Rockville:

I would ask that this testimony be submitted to the official record, and that the enclosed copy please be sent to City Council.

My husband, Alex Belida, and I have been residents or owned property in Rockville for more than 18 years. As a Rockville resident, one time newspaper reporter and later local editor, I have admired, written about and followed much of what has happened at Chestnut Lodge. The institution has a long association with Rockville, and it is remarkable how many people from outside Maryland are familiar with the psychiatric treatment hospital.

Two years ago, after returning from working in Africa, my husband, Alex Belida, and I enrolled our daughter at the Washington Waldorf School, about the time the school purchased the Chestnut Lodge property.

In my first role here tonight, as resident and former editor, I must say that if you ask any Rockville resident about what they identify as the Chestnut Lodge property, it would be the cathedral of oaks and the large brick structure that once was a hotel. It is visible from the street, beautifully set in the landscape, a dominant building that clearly has a long and interesting history.

It has been a longstanding wish of the historic Rockville community to have this part of the property, I believe about 8 acres, designated and preserved as historic.

However, nowhere in any of my ramblings as reporter or resident, has there ever been any mention of the community building designed by Chloethiel Woodard Smith that is the subject of tonight's hearing. I was astounded to learn of the application for historic status.



As a journalist, I have been trained to consider all sides of an issue, and to appreciate the importance of preserving history, and as a woman, I can appreciate the significance of Ms. Smith's accomplishments.

Today, as I went walking on the property as I often do, however, I was drawn not to her building, but rather as usual to the magnificent part of the property that fronts on West Montgomery Avenue. I was drawn as if by a magnet.

I then rambled back to the building in question. This modernist building, I realized, is one I have always avoided, and I think many other Rockville walkers would agree.

It is poorly situated and gloomy, an apparent afterthought on the edge of the property. The industrial innards are perched helter skelter across the roof, rather than being integrated with the structure, as should be done in modern architecture. I did not feel drawn into the building at any point.

If one peers into the windows, one would expect at least to see slate or flagstone floors, but instead they are ordinary tile on cement, broken and peeling.

The building has been acclaimed as a pioneering event in the treatment of mental illness, because of its openness and wide expanses of glass. I am neither architect or psychiatrist, but when I look in, all I see are the remnants of unhappiness: how windows were covered over, how the ordinary drinking fountain and exit signs jump to the eye. I do not see an architectural gem. When I stand next to the building and look out, I do not see the green and thick trees that would perhaps better complement its setting. Rather, I see new homes in every direction.

Mayor Larry Giammo said last week that Chloethiel Woodard Smith is an architect of world renown, and the Rockville staff report clearly indicates she was known for being a rare woman in architecture, an urban planner, a dominant force in the Washington region.. Using the research tool of Everyman, the Internet's Google, I find 38 entries, most of them concentrated in the Washington area.

But buildings take on dynamics of their own, and often it is the function of a building, not its designer, that gives it deep historical roots. Examples are famous churches, the Supreme Court building, homes built by Chloethiel Woodard Smith and other great architects that are still lived in by human beings.. The Capital Park Plaza Apartments on I Street Southwest, which Smith designed, even has its own website, to promote interest in living there – an example of one of her buildings that has kept its dynamics and life, and serves as a lasting monument to her modernist belief that form follows function.

Chloethiel Woodard Smith once put that idea very eloquently. In an obituary that mentioned her role in envisioning a home for the National Building Museum, she was

quoted as saying: "Architects are the set designers in people's lives, and until the lights go on and the play begins, we are the only people who have seen the whole and put the elements together."

I would submit here that the lights have gone out in the Chestnut Lodge community center. The building lacks the dynamics of its past life and purpose, lacks the magnetism of other buildings on the property, lacks identification within the community as something worthy of preservation, lacks the personality and palpable sense of its own history.

If it has outlived its usefulness, then it should not be preserved at all costs, especially since there are many other buildings from her hand that still serve lively purpose.

The cost of historic status for this community building would be very high, because it would be done so at the financial encumbrance of a very small school community, the Washington Waldorf School. Which brings me to my role as a member of the Waldorf community.

It should be noted that the Rockville historic community has been interested in preserving the front acres at Chestnut Lodge for nearly four decades. But the Bullard family and the lodge were dominant forces on the Rockville landscape during those years, and as I understand it, were able on numerous occasions to put off the proposals for historic designation.

Ironically, it took our very small school, with comparatively less significant standing in the community, to open the gateway to the designation process. The school's interest in fact dovetailed with that of the historic community, at least in the beginning. It was clear that the part of the property most beloved by Rockvilleans – the front part with the large old brick building – was also very dear to the school's own philosophical underpinnings.

But the ensuing and encroaching claims to other outbuildings, for example, the barn, complicated an already ambitious plan for our small school community – about 200 families from Kindergarten to High School, without an endowment or affluent backers in the wings.

Since we are a cooperative community, with nonprofit status, we have in the past year undergone the painful process of giving up our dream of moving to the Chestnut Lodge property. The application to have this obscure, unattractive building given historic status has really been the last, and unfair, blow, and has left many of us wondering how and why this has happened, and if perhaps other motivations – such as limiting development on the property – outweigh any true interest in historical preservation.

Thank you for your kind attention, Pat Reber

Good Evening

*exhibit  
rec.  
Dec. 14, 2003*



COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

My name is Corri Jimenez, I am a citizen of Rockville that put forward the city nomination for the designation of the Activities Building on the Chestnut Lodge campus. I have a master's degree in historic preservation and have been working in the field of architectural history for approximately 10 years.

As a representative of the Recent Past Preservation Network, we as a whole are currently looking at the 1954 Activities Building designed by Cloethiel Woodward Smith and if it meets the City of Rockville's criteria for historic designation. After careful review of the city's criteria applicable in this case, we have concluded that the Activities Building meets multiple criterion for designation.

I would like to submit our statement of significance constructed by the Recent Past Preservation Network that explains the city's criteria for the Activities Building:

According to the standards, this building has character, interest, or value as a part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of Rockville, Montgomery County and the United States. It is the collaborative outcome of master architect Cloethiel Woodard Smith and a world renowned institution, known as the Chestnut Lodge. In addition, it is a unique building that represents a philosophy of Chestnut Lodge, specifically a changing philosophy of the treatment of patients, and the role of design in the delivery of services.

This building is identified with a person or group who influenced society. The Activities Building is the single remaining building that stands today built during the time when these three internationally-recognized leaders in their professions—Bullard, Fromm-Reichman, and Smith—were producing work at Chestnut Lodge. No other building on the Chestnut Lodge campus can trace its design and use to the influence of these three individuals who influenced society in significant ways.

This building also exemplifies the cultural, economic, society, political and/or historical heritage of Montgomery County and its communities. The Activities Building is an

increasingly rare, tangible example of Chestnut Lodge's leadership and innovation in the medical field. The Activities Building is an early representation of post-World War II cultural, social, and economic progress in a community now known as a center for biotech research and health services.

The City of Rockville's staff have produced a thorough Maryland Historical Trust nomination form that further supports the Activities Building's criteria for its historical and cultural significance. Architectural and design significance as well is well represented for this building, and can be seen in the submitted letters in front of you by preservation professionals and experts, such as Richard Longstreth, Isabelle Gournay and Joey Lampl.

This building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period and/or method of construction. The Activities Building was recently addressed in a Modern Movement in Maryland survey completed by Univ. of Maryland Drs. Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies that identified this building as an excellent example of the modern movement in architecture, representing optimism, progress and international influence in the 20th century. In a September 1955 Architectural Forum article, the Activities Building is described as having the potential for QUOTE great influence both as a specific facility and as an example of what architecture, given the chance, can do for medicine. END QUOTE

This building represents the work of a master architect. Cloethiel Woodard Smith formed in 1950 a "loose" partnership with nationally renown modern architects Arthur Keyes, Nick Satterlee, and Don Lethbridge. Smith over her whole career was well-published on her architectural and planning designs, and received an AIA award beside Eero Saarinen and Pietro Belluschi. As a woman registered architect working in a male dominated field, she has significantly added her touch to the Washington DC area, which can be seen in SW DC, Reston, VA; and now Rockville.

This building lastly represents an established and/or familiar feature of the neighborhood, community and/or county due to its singular physical characteristic and landscape. The modern design and presentation of the Activities Building within its landscape is beautifully

noted on the Chestnut Lodge campus—a campus that expanded more than 80 years. The landscape plays with the modern building to assimilate its surroundings from the vegetation choices to the personal touches of the patient's therapeutic retaining wall. As a qualified architectural historian, this building meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation mentioned by my colleague John Hartranft because it has not been altered, and is Smith's original design spanning 1954-1972.

In conclusion, I encourage the Historic District Commission to designate this building as well as pass it on to the Mayor and Council for approval.

*Exhibit*

*received  
Dec 18, 2003*

DEC 18 2003

**COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

Eileen McGuckian, representing Peerless Rockville.

This is a difficult issue. The timing is also difficult.

The activities building is being evaluated at a time when we are just beginning to appreciate mid-20th century architecture.

The nomination came 7 weeks before conveyance of the property from one owner to another who plans to develop the area and to raze the building.

Peerless Rockville, which takes a position on most nominations, has been struggling with this one. Our Board of Directors has discussed this nomination at two board meetings since the nomination was made on October 24.

You should also know that Peerless Rockville has had informal discussions with the contract purchaser with regard to other structures on the property. These discussions followed Peerless' usual offers of expertise made to Washington Waldorf School, to two bidders for the property, and to Mr. Levine long before the purchase contract was signed. Nothing was settled during these discussions, and they did not influence our Board's position on this evaluation. As has been the practice for three decades, Peerless Rockville's position is independent.

There is no question that this building meets Rockville's criteria for architectural significance: Chloethiel Woodard Smith was an important architect.

Anne Brockett has prepared an excellent MHT form that enables us to understand how the talents of this architect melded with the client and institutional use to design this building.

That said, know that when this nomination process gets to the review of the Mayor and Council that Peerless Rockville will weigh in against designation. Our reasons are:

Since the first designation of Chestnut Lodge in 1974, the only structures addressed by private and public entities have been associated with the resort era (represented by the hotel building) and for the link to a nationally renown psychiatric institution.

Since Chestnut Lodge closed in 1996, designation and preservation emphasis has been solely on the hotel building, the row of buildings just south of it, the West Montgomery Avenue lawn and streetscape (8 acres designated in Sept. 2002), and Rose Hill mansion (2000) and nearby barn (2003). All of us can be proud of the inclusion of those historically and architecturally significant properties into Historic Districts.

This one-page nomination arrived on October 24 -- 30 years after initial historic district and National Register proposals, 7 years after the processes that led to the current designations, 6 months after the current owner signed a contract with a purchaser for the entire property, and 2 months after the contract purchaser decided to preserve and reuse 5 of the 8 historic buildings on the property, plus the West Montgomery Avenue streetscape.

Chloethiel Woodard Smith left her mark in two other Rockville places -- a residence on South Van Buren Street and the first NRC building on the Rockville Pike.

If the building were to be retained, it would lose the open space setting so important to architect and client and use.

With this background, Peerless Rockville believes that to place the activities building in a Historic District, with the retention of the structure that this implies, would not be fair to any of the parties to the process.



So what can we suggest?

- Remember the building and its architect. This fine architect and this interesting building can be commemorated by solid documentation, good photography, an exhibit, retention of pieces such as the stone wall, and/or other means on or near this site. Consider reusing the building, or a portion of the 3-part building, within the subdivision, perhaps as a community center or even as a residence. Either would be appropriate. Offer the building to a group or individual who will relocate, restore, and reuse it.

Thank you for your consideration.

